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A Stockman's Poems



By
Hugh B. Shafer



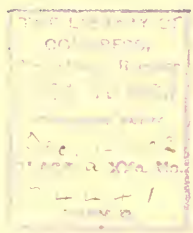
A STOCKMAN'S POEMS



1884

BY
HUGH B. SHAFER

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 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting this little volume, I deem it proper to state that the greater part of my life has been spent in the stock business, and that while so engaged I had never so much as thought of writing a poem.

My first effort was made about ten years ago, and from that time my interest in poetry has increased until I feel impelled, although with that hesitation and reluctance common to other writers, to place this small offering before the public.

While I have written quite a number of poems, I only propose that a few short ones may find place in this first volume.

With the hope that the reader may be pleased with a perusal of them, I remain,

Yours truly,

HUGH B. SHAFER.

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An Angel's Talk.

Two angel boys long years ago,
Along life's stream, its happy flow,
And each had smiles upon his face,
And dimples, too, that all could trace.

But one from life was snatched away,
The other left to still be gay.
Well, time rolled on just forty years,
And left the living full of tears.

His hair was white just like the snow,
And wrinkles came and would not go,
And age has settled on his face,
And all could look and furrows trace.

In midnight hours while nations sleep,
This gray-haired man had wondrous peep.
He saw in dreams his friend again
And he yet youthful still remained.

Well, how is this my long lost friend,
That you so youthful still remain,
And I have furrows on my face
That all mankind can clearly trace.

The sins of earth have brought you down
And not the years that have passed round—
I can see crime in every place
And marks of it on every face.

Your government old paths forsake,
By dint of war now land will take,
And it now robs the squalid poor
Across the seas on every shore.

Our government was kind and good
And honest, too, was understood,
And freedom reigned in every heart,
But now, alas! all good departs.

The tyrant's rule, the selfish clan,
They rob the poor of every land.
This claims to be a Christian land,
And governed now by God's command.

But Devils rule in every place
And all their works do them disgrace.
Their love of wealth can plain be seen,
They rob the poor, the lank, the lean.

An empire now we have in state,
The few now rule I must relate,
The ballot-box is now a sham,
This land is ruled, and by a clan.

We angels see these changes here
Upon this land we loved so dear,
But Satan now has full control
And only has to call the roll.

Each man now answers to his name,
And no one has an honest claim;
Each one agrees that he will steal,
His conscience seared, no sin can feel.

Now, this to you may seem all wrong,
For me to blame this wondrous throng,
But truth is truth, and angels know
When men do wrong where e'er we we go.

The Little Dime.

In quiet nook, I set me down
To write a little line,
Would like to say a word or two
About the precious dime.

If I had coffers filled today
That I could call my own,
I then could feel just like a king,
I would not need a crown.

The dime has beauty in its face
And all our race can please,
Its jingle, too, is awful sweet,
It sails around with ease.

No king will turn this creature off,
Each one will give a home,
In every clime upon this earth
It has a welcome dome.

Creates a smile, on careworn face
It dries the widow's tear,
Its jingle fills the miser's heart,
Nothing on earth more dear.

The parson, too, will not reject
This lucre in its place;
He fancies, too, the little dime,
Its smiling, shining face.

It has a charm, my friends for all,
We would not tell a lie,
For all invite the dime to call
When it is passing by.

The Big Dollar.

The Dollar, friends, I can't forget,
For it is better grown,
We like its jingle better still,
It has a better tone.

It moves this world, gives quicker pace,
It starts the torpid blood,
It makes the angels of this earth,
It buys the cloak and hood.

It makes the lame sometimes to walk,
It pays the doctor's bill,
It buys the soldier's uniform
And pays the man to drill.

It moves the fiddler's arm to play
And pays some folks to dance.
It fills the miser's heart with joy
And helps the dude to prance.

It pays the parson now to preach,
For they don't like to work
They go to school and learn to talk,
The dollar is no joke.

And every man, both rich and poor,
They cultivate a claim,
They have a friendship for the cash
And ask it to maintain.

Let him who hates the shining ore
Condemn my feeble verse,
Let him correct the falsehood here
And make this writing terse.

A Home.

A home is not a castle fair,
With dome that stands, up in mid-air,
And not a lawn, a verdant green,
With sparkling founts, with brilliant sheen.

It's not the texture of the wall,
Or workmanship, or shape at all,
And not the flowers that bloom so fair,
And give their odor to the air.

It's not of music's sweetest tone,
That you can hear, when all alone;
Nor yet a voice with accents sweet,
That charm each one that she may greet.

Then what is home? I ask the sage,
That I may place it on this page,
That man no longer home confound
With things he finds upon the ground.

Your home is where your hearts commune,
With kindest thought, with you in tune.
Your home is where you lie and rest,
And not by want or famine pressed.

Your home is your own dwelling place,
Where you can rest from worldly chase;
Where you can have your easy gown,
And not by dress or fashion bound.

A home is where a woman dwells,
Who can produce those joyous spells;
A home is where our love remains,
And soars above all selfish claims.

Haunted Halls.

I sat me down in vaunted halls
With grandeur all around,
The brilliant lights were shining there
And beauty did abound.

I saw the maids—the upper-tens,
With dresses gored and frilled.
I saw the feathers on their hats,
But never saw them still.

They seemed to flutter in the breeze
Just like the living bird,
But if they gave the old time chirp,
Can't say, upon my word.

The gents were standing all around
Just like a lot of beasts.
The girls were gabbling all the time
Just like a flock of geese.

And smiles I saw, and dimples, too,
And bright and sparkling eyes,
And pretty teeth and maiden tints
And grace as they passed by.

But why I paint this picture, friends,
In age's sure decline,
And why I fancy still these scenes
That are upon my mind?

Are questions I can't ferret out
Unless I am a fool,
Or guided by some foolish imp,
Or for Old Nick a tool.

A Poet or An Owl.

While night broods o'er a country far
The owls and bats get up a jar
While men are sleeping on their cots
The poet writes, and Oh, why not?

While owls keep up discordant notes
The poet sits and writes and jokes;
The owl is not a bird or cat,
Betwixt, between and all of that.

The poet, neither man nor brat,
But sits and writes and all of that;
Well, both are fools to lose their sleep,
And both these fools at daylight peep.

And both will sleep in brightest day,
And both denied a cheerful ray.
And neither fancied by his clan,
But poet has the better scan.

If man could change his happy lot,
Would he be poet here or not?
Or be the owl in woods to roam,
In darkest night have saddest tone?

If owl, no lack for raiment, then,
With somber suit the winter stem,
Fare better than the most of men,
And not for theft be put in pen.

Then be the owl, no poet man,
And sit and sing discordant clang.
The poet is born to sadness here,
And has no friends to drop a tear.

The Texas Maid.

While sitting here beneath this shade,
A thought runs monstrous high,
We think about the Texas Maid
And of her acts so shy.

She won't do courting like a man
And pop the question quick,
But does maneuver awful well,
And does some things so slick.

Her eyes are changing like the storm—
Can show revenge and hate,
And hide a lot of wondrous things
Inside her little pate.



It takes a man, of shrewdest type,
To read this angel well,
For she can feign just what she please
When she has mimic spell.

Some think she has a charm within
To lead our sex astray;
At any rate, she leads us oft,
And have us go her way.

Each modest youth is not aware
Of all her wily ways,
In innocence is charmed by her,
Don't understand displays.

But we old married convicts know
Imprisonment for life,
And we submit to all our wrongs—
We give up manly strife.

A Prophecy.

The brightest days of our fair land
Are numbered with the past,
No Solomon is needed now
To blow this truthful blast.

Republics live in honest climes,
And not by force of arms.
The clank of war and prison walls
To us can have no charms.

A fettered land across the seas
To us will give no strength,
But clog will prove in days to come
Throughout its width and length.

Dishonest ballot in our land
Show forth a sad decay,
When future storms blow o'er our land
They will create dismay.

A lack of faith in those who rule
Is now a common thing,
From counties now up to our states
Are ruled by meanest rings.

No patriot to tramp the sod,
No help from man or God;
This land can't do as once it did,
This land is bound to plod.

In time to come, when storms arise,
I may be in my tomb,
But men who read this little verse
Will see this country's doom.

A Better Range.

I dreamed one night, when on my couch,
The wind had made a change;
I dreamed I found another land,
A pure and better range.

The grass was growing on the hills
So strong, so fresh, so green,
That had I been a painter boy,
Would there have drawn that sheen.

I stood on banks of crystal streams,
I saw their graceful flow,
I heard the murmur of their voice
So soft, so sweet, so low.

I saw the birds of that fair land,
Their plumage, grand and gay,
I saw them flit upon the breeze,
And saw their grand display.

The fish I saw in mountain brooks,
In crystal, limpid streams—
I saw them stand, like in mid-air,
In morning's early gleam.

And then I thought of Texas range,
Its tanks, its wells, its springs,
And thought about our troubles here
That life is sure to bring.

Then let me have this fairy land,
All shining in the air,
For he who has a sportive mind
Is certain to get there.

This World Not Right.

This world don't wiggle right at all,
I have been watching close.
The rain dont come at the right time,
And hence this mud and slosh.

We have some days that are too hot,
And some are awful cold;
In winter time the flies behave,
In sunner always bold.

When you would have a quiet sleep,
Forget your many cares,
A cackling hen comes to the front
With tones inclined to jar.

In gloomy night, when you would rest,
Forget yourself and woes,
Some evil thoughts take hold of you
And will not let you go.

This world ain't right, I've tried it, friends.
This world, I say, won't do,
For if this world would work all right
Why should a man get blue?

Why not rejoice from morn till night,
Why not sing joyous song?
Why not this world give us good grub;
Don't we to it belong?

This world might furnish tonics, too,
To help our feeble clay,
When dismal clouds are coming near,
To drive those clouds away.

My Dream.

While on my couch, in stilly night,
I dreamed a dream of life,
I saw a city, all complete,
And men engaged in strife.

Each one had work, of his own kind,
Had lots of work to do;
And each one had his route to go,
And each one had his clue.

I saw inscribed on city hacks,
A baker kind and true;
And saw some drivers tumble ice
At places ice was due.

The horses moved in hurried gait
Like trotting at a fair;
The men who walked were stepping fast,
All trying to get there.

Is life so short, and death so near,
To cause this monstrous haste?
Or is each man disposed to lead
In this our worldly chase.

I then waked up from slumber's land
And asked in quiet tones,
"Will you tell me, my dearest friend,
Is this not San Antone?"

Joy.

It's not in castle on the hill,
Or in the gaudy hall,
Nor in the giddy dance we find
A pleasure there for all.

It's not with statesmen wise and great
With laurels on the brow,
To sit and sing in stilly eve—
A statesman don't know how.

Its not with wealth, with coffers filled
With bright and shining gold,
Nor cattle on a thousand hills,
Nor all we can behold.

But he who has contented mind
And gets his daily bread,
And bends the knee both night and morn
To him who has him fed.

All joy is found within the heart,
The place where pleasure dwells,
And here we find the seat of joy,
In it the happy spell.

Then ask of God a purer heart,
And angels there to dwell,
For they create a joy within,
And cause the happy spell.

No dwelling place for angel host,
No temple for the gods,
Man is a brute and has no joy,
He packs a worldly hod.

A Fairy Tale.

In noonday time I lay me down
Beneath a quiet shade—
A breeze was playing with the leaves
That did to sleep persuade.

And in my sleep a form appeared—
A figure lithe and fair,
It seemed to be of woman's form—
Had long and silky hair.

Had dimples both in cheek and chin,
Like rose buds was her cheek,
And when she looked and smiled at me,
I saw her pearly teeth.

I stood and gazed, I lacked for words,
I lost, my friends, my speech.
I did not know just what to do,
When out her hand she reached.

She said, "This is a fairy land
And I the fairy queen—
How did you cross the fairy line,
How reach this land, I mean?"

About this time the lightning flashed.
I felt the thunders jar.
When I waked up and looked around,
And found I was not there.

I found myself in old St. Marks
Upon that rocky hill,
Oh, friends, come shed a tear with me,
For I am with you still,

The Tyrant's Song.

While wealth in splendor rides supreme
And sports with flowers upon the green,
The poor are seen to walk the road
And would their burdens now unload.

But tyrants say yet trudge along,
For you are of that abject throng;
For you there is no better place,
To toil for you is no disgrace.

Why not content, with wages set,
And work and toil, keep out of debt?
Why would you take the master's place
And bring about a foul disgrace?

Set hours to work and time to play,
Arrange an hour for grand display;
Why ask in life a gentry claim,
Why not a servant still remain?

The flowers of life are for the few
And not for peasants such as you;
Go toil then and be content
With what your God has nobly sent.

The great can live in castles fair,
And breathe in life a balmy air;
But slaves were made to bear the yoke,
And pull the thorns that sometimes choke.

Then stay, ye servants, in your place,
And not the lords of earth disgrace;
This world was made but for the few,
And not for serfs, such men as you.

[Written and composed by Hugh B. Shafer for the upholding of union labor
in answer to an article that was seen in the Tribune of April 16.]

Thoughts of Early Spring.

While sitting in a shady nook
In morning's early dawn,
All nature there was on the move
Both in the woods and lawn.

The birds were singing sweetest song,
The cattle full of play,
The dew was shining on the grass—
All nature seemed so gay.

If all of nature leaps with joy
What must we say of man,
When he the lord of all things here,
And has entire command?

Should he not praise like nature does
The Maker of all things,
And serve the God who gave him birth,
And all these blessings bring?

Should he not love all nature here—
Each living, creeping thing;
Should he not have a watchful eye,
And to all nature cling?

For man is owner of this earth—
The seas are all his own,
And all he lacks of being lord,
He does not wear a crown.

But no one here disputes his claim,
He guides the ship of state;
But man will do some dirty work,
In truth I must relate.

My Observations.

While calmly sitting in my chair
I look upon the street,
And, friends, I take in everything
My eyes may chance to greet.

The venders come, with fruits and milk,
Each one a little bell,
And they all ring upon the street
And stop a little spell.

The ladies also walk the streets
With skirts, I think, too long;
It takes one hand to hold them up
Just where they should belong.

If she should stumble on the street,
How great would be her fall!
Just one small hand to give relief
Would be no help at all.

Suppose her nose would strike the stone
And thus become a pug?
Then her best man'd go back on her—
Her nose would be the rub.

It's better far, cut off the skirts—
Not let them touch the ground,
For brooms were made to sweep the street,
Not ladies' costly gowns.

How graceful, then, with old-time skirt
The use of two good hands,
And then more play for little feet
Be more at their command.

I Ought to Be Thankful.

I look above, the sky is clear,
No cloud above my head;
I breathe the air—the air is pure,
Then what have I to dread?

No lightning's flash athwart the skies,
No thunder's distant roar,
No howling winds I hear aloft,
No thing that I deplore.

I have no castle on the hill
With towering, shining dome,
And yet I have enough to eat,
And have a pleasant home.

I have some friends, God bless them, too,
Who have been kind to me,
And when this world was full of clouds
They filled my heart with glee.

I have a wife all kind and true
Who helps me on the way,
When darkest hours are o'er my head
That wife then casts a ray.

I have a God with small, still voice,
I hear when oft I pray,
And he can turn December's blast
To balmy, smiling May.

With God and wife and home and friends,
Why not I be content,
For all the blessings I receive,
This God has kindly sent.

“Turn Backward.”

Turn backward, turn backward, ye princes of state,
Before it shall be for a nation too late;
Go back to the doctrines our fathers have taught
And for eight long years so valiantly fought.

Turn backward, turn backward to freedom of state,
Before it shall be for a nation too late.
To each dear sister, who is of this band,
Be equal in all things that are of this land.

Turn backward, turn backward from bondage again,
For what care we for the slaves we may claim;
Then let freedom return, a land of the free,
The nation all happy and all full of glee.

Turn backward, turn backward from land we may claim
From war and tumult, by battle may gain;
The stars and the stripes not float o'er the soil
That we may gain by wars and turmoil.

The people, the people, should rule our fair land,
And not be governed by clicks or by clans,
For this is a nation, a land of the free,
And we as a nation all brothers should be.

Let slavery remain a thing of the past,
And we here no more our brother hold fast,
But let the oppressed from tyranny come,
And they find in our land a welcome, a home.

Then God will be with us, and fill us with glee,
For all will have rights, just like you and like me.
Our flag then can float o'er the land of the free,
A nation of freemen this world then can see.

Ambition.

If life was all a constant climb,
O, what a ladder then for man;
If in this life no slips or slides,
What need we then for wisdom guides?

Why should we ask for legal lore,
Or doctor's drug, or any bore?
An upward look, a wish to climb,
Not stop to ask for help divine.

But when and where would human stop?
No end to ladder and no top;
Heaven would be too near the ground
For many men, we would be bound.

To perch with angels would not do,
Must look and long for other clue,
Some other heaven above their sky
Too high for angels e'er to fly.

When in that land no topmost round—
No one content, too close to ground,
Still climbing for a fairer land,
And asking God for his command.

Now, friends, suppose a round should break,
And man no wings, what course would take?
When human has his slips and slides,
A downward course he must describe.

If earth don't catch this helpless crew,
Hell is the station next that's due,
And when a mortal gets this fall,
It rids him of his human gall.

This ladder, friends, is oft described
By men of earth, of pomp and pride.
Ambition finds a wondrous fall,
And rids them of their human gall.

The rich, the great, have highest perch,
But, O, how oft left in the lurch,
And kingdoms fall just like the man,
They, too, will take this lofty scan.

When nations rise above mid-air,
Their ladders then can't stand a jar ;
The distance then, too great from earth,
Our mother land that gave us birth.

Ambitions cause a nation's fall,
A downward course, and for us all.
O! where is Rome, her proud domain,
A remnant left, and it so lame.

The organ-grinder on the street
Is all of Rome you now can greet ;
No more the soldier, bright and gay,
In rank and file to make display.

Her laurels swept by hand divine,
And her extinct in shortest time.
If Rome could fall and not rebound,
How might it be by this, our ground?

Is this our land, upheld by man,
Or does a God oft take a scan?
If all of human, I despair,
If all of God, he has my prayer.

The Founders of Our Country.

When on my couch, in midnight hours,
Then visions come and go;
And statesmen come of stalwart size,
Of many years ago.

A gloom has settled on their face;
I see in them despond;
I will not ask the cause of this
For fear I might do wrong.

George Washington, and Jefferson,
Are of this wondrous clan;
And many other statesmen wise
That I can clearly scan.

Why would they quit their resting places,
And to me thus appear?
Is not this land their place of rest,
A land that they hold dear?

There must be something wrong with us
That they can clearly see;
Why would the tears run down their cheeks,
Why have they now no glee?

I cannot live in this suspense,
Will ask them what is wrong;
And I will tell the world their tale
And sing their saddest song.

Their tune may not sound well to us,
May seem to have discord;
For angels' songs might here be sung,
That devils would discord.

They Tell Their Tale.

Why use the yoke of tyranny
We lifted from your necks?
Why would you vote for greedy men
You ought to hold in check?

Why would you go to foreign lands
To shed a brother's blood
When you could be a friend to him—
Might do to him some good?

And why depart from maxims old?
Have they not stood the test?
And why seek out another road?
Was not the old the best?

Return my children, O return,
From vice, and gold, and sin;
And be a people once again,
And not let "Nick" come in.

Your fathers shed their blood for right,
And would do naught for wrong;
They gave to you this lovely land,
To you it now belongs.

Then let no tyrant have a home
Upon your sacred soil;
And let no devil fill a place
That would bring on turmoil.

But let the peaceful have the reins,
And guide the ship of state,
Before our God may curse this land,
, And prove we are too late.

The Philosophy of Life.

It's not our years that make us old,
And not our toil in life,
But it is things that bother us—
It is our war and strife.

Each picture here has a gloomy side
That fills our hearts with woe,
Each picture has a sunny side
We never should let go.

He who lives 'mid crag and cliff,
Where flowers are seen to bloom,
He need not fear the gloomy side,
For there, there is no room.

There water falls from stone to stone,
It sings a cheerful song,
Then time gets on its swiftest wing,
Our hours are then not long.

Then what is age, my old-time friend,
What of our days and years
If we have joy from sun to sun,
We have no time for tears.

The birds will not forget to sing
Amid your shady nooks,
And muses may be lurking there
Beside your little brooks.

And they may ask of you a song
To sing of Willbern's Glen,
Its waters now are growing old,
But yet a music lend.

A Winsome Lass.

A winsome lass goes by my house
With dark and glossy curls;
And when she smiles, and looks at me,
Her teeth appear like pearls.

Her lips are like the rubies cast
Upon some foreign shore;
Her eyes are like the midnight hour,
The kind that I adore.

Her lithsome form, must I discuss—
Can fairies be described?
Would call her of the angel kind,
If angels here abide.

And when she walks she seems to glide
Like visions fair in form;
Her smile it is, of innocence—
This lass would do no harm.

But why allowed to live on earth
And learn of sorrow here,
And learn to love some wayward man,
And shed the bitter tear?

Why not in darkest midnight hour
The angels take her home,
And plant her in a better soil—
A brighter land to bloom?

Why stand the angels idly by,
If death is in the land?
Why don't they take this lovely girl
To Heaven, that happy stand?

The Snoring Man.

Of all the pests in this broad land
The decent man deplores
Is to be forced in some hotel
To sleep with the man that snores.

The snorer falls upon his back,
Forgets his grief and woes.
And soon you hear his wondrous snore—
He seems to say "Here goes."

If you could lose your hearing then—
Not hear the thunder's roar,
At morn you would be more refreshed,
Not count him such a bore.

But, O! that sound, my dearest friend,
What struggle and discord—
Enough to make a nervous man
To wish him under sod.

There is no law to kill them off
Or "pen" them here for life,
And yet they murder nervous men,
And cause unlawful strife.

If Nick would take this snoring crew
And build for them a hell,
We all might live like brothers then,
A happy place to dwell.

No one could hear the other snore,
For all would be asleep,
And all that Nick would have to do
To take a little peep.

The Old Granger.

When tyrants planned to rob the poor,
A thing that honest men deplore,
Old parties stood and saw their plans,
But no one gave a helping hand.

At length the granger, old and true,
His weapon of defense he drew;
He said all wealth comes from the ground,
And asked the farmer set this down.

All trusts are work of evil hands,
And helped by parties in command,
These men to us will give no help,
They also work alone for pelf.

Then we must organize alone,
Protect our all, our happy homes,
And let old parties go to Hell,
Or some warm place where they should dwell.

And we must build a platform strong
To save ourselves from coming harm.
Our planks must be both sound and true,
And kept secure from poisonous dew.

Our hands be clean from office spoils,
And we must shun all these turmoils;
But best laid schemes of mice and men,
We cannot always here defend.

At night when all was calm and still,
We heard some grinding on our mill;
Our platform plank these thieves now claim.
But we are grangers, such remain.

Hope.

In idle hours, while here alone
In my old rocking chair,
I think about this funny world
With all its storm and care.

No one content with his own lot;
Each has a higher claim;
From kings now sitting on the throne
Down to the weak and lame.

Tomorrow's sun will tell the tale,
Tomorrow's dew will fall,
Then joy will come to every man,
And blessings for us all.

And none without the faintest hope
Of joys that are to come,
And but for this, this world a blank,
This earth a gloomy home.

Is hope the only ray of life—
The only cheer for man?
Is hope the brightest star above—
For mortals here to scan?

Then praise the star that cheers our path,
That lights our gloomy way;
And pray that hope shine brighter still
Unto that perfect day.

This star will shine at Heaven's gate
And cast a gladsome ray;
And light our pathway in the past,
And then shall fade away.

My Native Land.

I long to go where mountains stand,
With peaks amid the skies;
I long to live where limpid streams
Run down the mountain sides.

I long to see the azure blue
Along the mountain strand,
And see the landscape once again
Of my dear native land.

Would see the birds of my own clime,
And hear their songs once more,
Would see again my native land—
The land that I adore.

Would live a day in that fair land,
Would be a boy again,
And have a heart as pure as then,
And such I would remain.

I would not ask for manhood's prime,
For cares would mar my life,
My hair turn gray and wrinkles come
Amid this war and strife.

But I would live the cheerful boy,
And smile on all around,
And I would spend my fleeting hours
On my dear, native ground.

This World is Wrong.

While winds are shifting in our land,
I take a grand survey;
Will any gale pass by this way
To make the poor feel gay.

When will the laws deal equal here,
Treat rich just like the poor?
When will we love the poor in heart,
And virtue most adore?

When will we cease to fawn on wealth
And worship yellow ore?
When will we count all pomp and pride
As but an earthly bore?

When will we honor men the most
To whom it is most due?
When will we scorn all men on earth
We know to not be true?

For in the end the scales will hang,
A feather change the sides,
And as they turn the tale be told,
The turn we must abide.

No legal lore, no false excuse,
For crimes that we have done;
The scales will work exactly right,
And show where we belong.

It might be best to stop and think
While yet upon this strand,
For on the other side, they say,
Gold has no great demand.

My Answer to An Inquiry Made About Cherokee.

It is a place amid the hills,
With sand and mud, but not a rill;
The water runs upon the streets
And makes a lake or water sheet.

The ducks and geese can swim around,
And have a chat on city grounds;
And hogs and cows always in town,
It seems to be a grazing ground.

The people differ like the swine,
Not all were raised in Texas clime;
Some are large and big and fat,
And some are small—walk like a cat.

Not all are workers in this town,
When chairs are scarce, sit on the ground,
These men have pants well fortified,
If lands are steep they all can slide.

No bums are seen in Cherokee,
No one can have a genteel spree;
No bar-room here to give us cheer,
No place to keep the larger beer.

Cold drinks are all you can expect,
For local option is their text;
When colic comes and gives a call,
A camphor bottle—that is all.

And yet this town is of the best,
They all feed well if you should bust;
No one can hunger in this land—
In this they do the Lord's command.

**A Tribute to the Memory of Lew Owens ;
My Old-Time Friend.**

In early days, long, long ago,
When we of youth had joyous flow,
I met you, Lew, upon this strand,
As yet have found no better man.

Some men can boast of church and state,
And grander deeds, perhaps, relate,
But you can claim to be a friend,
A claim too high for most of men.

In every place I found you true,
Always I found a friend in you,
In storm and calm, always the same,
No fault in you that I could blame.

To virtue, Lew, you was her slave,
And to protect was always brave,
In every storm, and every blight
Your course I thought was ever right.

Well, times have changed, and years have fled,
And some have said that you were dead ;
Believe them not, my honest friends,
No death awaits an earthly gem.

You are, I know, on other side,
Where all must go whate'er betide,
But death on you can have no claim,
Death only claims the vile and lame.

What I have said your friends can tell,
For all your neighbors loved you well,
These lines I write are nothing new,
Only a tribute, just and true.

The Way of the World.

If God would ask the angels come
And take up their abode,
Would they be neighbors to our clan—
Would we accept their code?

Would we be friendly to those bands
And give a helping hand,
Or would we wish them emigrate
To some far distant land?

Would we not claim the world too small
For all that mighty host?
That man now needs each acre here,
And needs each tree and post?

Would we not ask them for their creeds,
And how inclined to vote,
And if they wanted office here,
And would they kindly tote?

And if they differed from our clan,
Not quite be orthodox,
Away with angels, then, my friends,
No home amid these rocks.

But what if Nick would here apply
For a substantial home,
Broad acres here to occupy,
A bright and shining dome?

This world is large enough for all,
And has its joys to loan,
And man is kind to all his friends,
And he would make him room.

Then what a neighbor we would have,
A friend both bright and gay,
A smile for every one on earth,
For every one a ray.

His creed would suit the epicure
And those who care for wine;
His creed would suit the young and gay,
His plans would be sublime.

He would advise the people all
To fix and go to church,
And caution them to fix up well,
And not be left in lurch.

He might advise the parson, too,
To go in fashion's way,
For all who dress in flunkey garb,
Will surely go astray.

He might be in the music, too,
Not fond of harsh discord,
He might advise but few to sing,
But sing to praise the Lord.

And he might talk in such a way
As not to bring up self,
But have the parson on the watch
To gain the sordid pelf.

The writer, friends, is well acquaint
With Nick and all his ways;
If he was not, how tell about
The Devil's grand displays?

This World.

On life's grand current I yet flow,
When it shall end I do not know.
When storms arise and waves run high,
I claim a Help that stands close by.

A God can calm the raging seas
And watch the sparrows on the trees.
God is, I know, in calm and storm,
And He can keep me from all harm.

Then let this river onward flow,
And I in current quietly go.
I will not check this old-time stream,
For oft it has a joyous gleam.

But soon or late this flow must end,
And no more current here for men.
With some our youthful tide has gone
And some can't smile—they feel forlorn.

Not years and days that make us gray,
But age comes on from our display,
For friction brings our wrinkles on—
Small shoes will bring the worst of corns.

For those who limp can always tell
From whence the limp, from heaven or hell,
And man alone is oft to blame,
And need not seek another name.

Then all ye wrinkled, starving crew,
We lay life's troubles all on you.
This world was made and rigged for men,
And I must say she is a glen.

Don't Be Vain.

Do not be vain, ye feeble ones,
Of this, our little world;
This universe is grander still,
And by God's power is hurled.

The feeble clouds you don't control,
You cannot check a storm;
Be quiet, then, my little man,
And do not be alarmed.

For God has worked this universe
For years before you came;
Don't have one fear for wind or storm,
Jehovah is not lame.

If you will do your duty here,
Just work the livelong day,
God will send what you need here,
Your God will make the hay.

Then have no fears, ye little ones,
You are a little fry;
It's God that runs this universe,
It's God that stands close by.

This world will run when you are gone,
Where e'er your steps may be,
If covered up beneath her soil
Or hid beneath the sea.

Then have no fears, my little man,
God reigns on land and sea,
He fills our hand with choicest fruits,
He fills our hearts with glee.

The Boers.

Is there no justice in our land,
No honor here of late;
No sympathy for the oppressed
In boasted church or state?

Are we to look across the main
Upon a foreign shore,
And see the tyrants scourge that land,
And paint with blood and gore.

And see the mothers delve and dig
To feed the hungry child,
While English nobles drink and feast,
And cater to their pride?

Are we to see them rob the Boers
Of their dear fatherland,
And not allowed to say one word,
Not raise a valiant hand?

And can we love a land like this,
That gives no helping hand;
That looks and sees their neighbors robbed
And makes no stern demand?

And are there now no patriots,
No one to fight for right,
Like cowards see our neighbors robbed,
And we almost in sight?

Let all who would have justice done
Go join a valiant band,
And then select a leader brave,
And give to him command.

Gonzales.

Long years ago, when I, a boy,
I saw your lovely town;
When I, a stranger in this land,
And moving 'round and 'round.

But, oh, how changed are all things now.
The old hotel is gone,
Anw now you have a larger town,
And yet I feel forlorn.

Where are the men that I met here
Just forty years ago?
Do they still live upon the sod,
And have a youthful glow?

Or are they numbered with the dead,
Now asleep beneath the soil,
And do they sleep a peaceful sleep,
No longer have turmoil?

If yet alive their heads are gray,
They walk with feeble gait,
Or it may be no hair at all
Now left upon the pate.

Well, time has done a work for us,
My kind old Texas friends;
We are not boys, as once we were,
But hope now better men.

A few more years will close us out;
We leave just one by one,
And when a call is made for us,
The answer will be, no, none.

Summer and Winter.

When chill November's surly blast
Makes field and forest bare,
I, too, would lay my burdens down,
Would rid myself of care.

Would stand awhile a leafless tree,
Forget the cares of life,
Would sleep or rest through winter's blast—
Would have no care or strife.

Forget my sorrows of the past,
Remember them no more;
Would sleep and rest the winter through,
Let chill November blow.

When joyous May comes on anon,
With balmy winds to blow,
I then be like the forest tree,
Would have the overflow.

And when the forest paints her sheen
In colors grand and gay,
I, too, would like to be on hand
And make a grand display.

I am a child of Nature, too,
And subject to her rule,
The tree and I both stand the blast,
Both members of her school.

Both fall alike upon the sward,
Both lie just like we fall:
Both may be found with sweetest bloom,
Both may have bitter gall.

Man Wants But Little.

Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long;
Don't ask to have her stature great,
Nor ask her wondrous strong.

Man wants but little here below,
Don't ask for size or might,
But asks her have a tiny foot,
And asks a nimble gait.

Man wants but little here below,
Don't ask for war in haste,
But asks for pretty smiling eyes
And dimples in her face.

Man wants but little here below,
Don't ask for dress and pride,
But wants a partner for this life
To with him here abide.

Man wants but little here below,
He cannot live alone,
He wants a little wife on earth
To give him proper tone.

Man cannot live a hermit here
In this big world of storm,
He needs a woman in his house
Always on hand to charm.

A little wealth, a little wife,
A little while to stay,
The little while he lives on earth,
Let little man be gay.

The Fool Sayeth There is No God.

If all the books of ancient lore
Were placed beneath the sod,
There yet would be sufficient proof
To show there is a God.

The sun that shines upon our land,
That warms old mother earth,
Must prove to every living man
The grandeur of his birth.

The moon that lights our midnight hour,
That casts her silver ray,
Must prove to every thinking man
She makes a grand display.

The stars that twinkle o'er our head,
That give a lesser light,
Are useful, too, in their own way—
A blessing, too, at night.

The dews that fall upon our land
'Mid stillness of the night,
They do a wondrous good on earth,
They save our land from blight.

If sun, moon, stars and dew
Be not the works of God,
Then who the author of these things?
Who here upon this sod?

The universe, my friends, is here,
And was not made by chance,
A God we find in everything,
And always in advance.

Then, feeble man, creation stands,
A picture grand and great,
If you can't scan this picture well,
'Tis failing of your pate.

If you can't see God's footprints here,
His track upon our land,
You are a child of feeble birth,
You are not quite a man.

Well, imbeciles infest our land,
And they come here to stay,
But if they live for eighty years,
They never cast a ray.

Creation stands above their heads,
Wisdom out of sight,
He was not made to be a sage,
He is a human blight.

The fool, you know, says in his heart,
On earth there is no God,
And thus he talks within himself,
And thus he has to plod.

The wise man finds in Nature's book
A source of wondrous joy,
And when he has a leisure hour,
He has a grand employ.

A thousand pictures loom bright
In Nature's gaudy field,
And every picture gives a joy,
Each one a blessing yields.

Ignorance.

"I do not know old ignorance"
Is what each one would say,
My house is filled with better guests
Who often cast a ray.

Now old man Wise, the grand old sage,
Is one of my best friends,
And what we say and what we do
To none we make amends.

For wisdom has no faults to hide,
He will not lie or steal,
He is no beggar here on earth,
For help makes no appeal.

Intelligence is always here,
He boards with me each day,
And when old knowledge takes a walk,
Then shows to me the way.

But knowledge is my constant friend,
He sleeps with me at night;
In midnight hours when all is dark
His light is shining bright.

But ignorance, the old outcast
Who goes from door to door,
He cannot live beneath my roof,
And need not me implore.

He may find lodgings in this town,
May be a welcome guest,
But he can't breathe beneath my roof,
And need not make request.

O, why would men deny old friends,
Companions here for life,
Who stick to us in every turn,
And closer than a wife.

O, why not claim a friendship dear
From early childish hours
To when our heads are turning gray
Beneath these earthly bowers?

For ignorance will follow us,
And will not let us go,
And he will be our constant friend
While life here has its flow.

And when our sun is going down,
Its rays are in the west,
He will not leave us even then,
We need not make request.

And when our eyes are dim in death,
And we on other shore,
Will still hold on with stronger grip
Than ever did before.

This land will all be new to us,
Its pastures then so green,
Still waters, too, as they flow on,
Not have this earthly gleam.

O, would the angels tell us all,
Is this our place of rest,
Is this the land of promise here,
And shall we now possess.

A Thought.

What joys would be in store for me,
If I but had the cash;
What dainty food upon my board,
How rich would be my hash.

Cold turkey cut in savory bits,
And served in richest cream;
Rich butter stewed with this good dish,
To give the proper gleam.

Then coffee served by Frenchman's hand,
That always tells its tale;
Will bring sweet visions from afar,
I never knew it fail.

Hot cakes come on as good things do
Just in the nick of time;
Rich milk we take with cakes, you know,
And think them quite sublime.

And who would stint the inner man,
With coffers filled with gold?
And who refuse to serve his maw
When he these things behold?

But this not all, my old time friends,
All things should be in tune,
My waistband cut the proper length,
We all like ample room.

With stovepipe hat, Prince Albert coat,
A necktie white as snow;
A fluent tongue and sprightly wit,
And friends where'er I go.

This world would wiggle then all right,
I be Professor Jones;
My walk and gait to be all right,
To show the upper tones.

I then look down on common men
As of the common herd;
The imbeciles look up to me,
My servants by me feared.

I be on earth a little king,
But lack the golden crown;
I not look up to any man,
But always looking down.

If I could live ten thousand years
And be the little king;
My dying day would be far off,
Too far to feel the sting.

But on this life I have no lease,
Not for a single day;
The life we have is far too short
To make a grand display.

I might build up a little throne,
Have scepter in my hand,
And death might come a-stalking in
And make his stern command.

If death would deal like all good men,
Would stand a compromise,
But yellow gold and good things here
They say he does despise.

Tunes I Like and Tunes I Dislike.

Don't play your old-time tunes for me,
They always give me pain;
Don't sing of Dixie one time more,
I now don't like the strain.

I don't like Yankee Doodle now,
Or Boys that Wear the Blue;
Those dear old tunes all make me sad,
Then why these tunes renew.

I want a strain called Equal Rights,
But not God Save the King;
For we have breathed of Freedom's air,
And heard the poor folks sing.

A song for millions don't suit me,
With vaults of shining gold;
And men in rags all standing 'round,
I would not these behold.

I like to hear the boy at plow,
In Springtime's early morn;
And like to see the country maid,
With smiles to life adorn.

The city belle I don't admire
With all her plumage fair,
The birds that wore that plumage once
Sailed out in Freedom's air.

Then let us have a little song,
Let's call it Bonnie Doon;
And let the band leave Dixie out,
For it I have no room.

The Good Old Way.

Some folks are wanting something new,
And looking in advance,
But I do love the good old way,
Prefer to take no chance.

If I could live life o'er again—
Would shake no apple tree,
Just let my apples ripen well,
And then fall down for me.

I'd take no chances with the girls,
I never would be rash,
But I would go and go and go,
And eat her father's hash.

If all her folks would treat me well,
Would have for me a grin,
There would not be a chance at all,
I surely would come in.

But I would keep my secret close,
Not of my prospect tell;
But I would hang around and watch,
Let apples ripen well.

Then I would play the timid lad,
Would lack a manly speech,
And then my girl would pity me,
A helping hand would reach.

Some folks are looking for new ways,
Are down upon the past,
But I do love the good old way,
Would have it always last.

Our Boyhood Days.

I can't forget my childish days,
Of boyhood's happy glee;
I can't forget the girl I loved,
The girl that roamed with me.

Each man alive can tell this tale,
For it is nothing new;
If it don't come at sweet sixteen,
At twenty always due.

Some charmer comes, of maiden form,
And throws him in a trance;
And he can't dodge her wily charms,
To music he must dance.

But he can play the fool, you know,
As you and I have done;
And tell the tale of sixty years,
Just how this spell begun.

My heart was charmed—had quicker beat;
Was this the way with you?
I could not look a steadfast look,
Say, friend, is this not true?

I had a kind of restless air,
In no retreat content,
Unless the girl was at my side;
My friend, were you thus bent?

Now years have fled and things have changed,
A change upon our brow;
But you can tell the tale as well,
You know as well just how.

Each One a Fitness for Something.

My cares come up, have strong demand
Upon my precious time;
Must look for food, and raiment, too,
Don't have much time to rhyme.

If I had pastures wide and large,
And herds on them to roam,
I might sit down in easy chair,
Why not I live at home?

If I owned lands, and had men hired
To simply count exchange,
I might, then, drive a coach and four,
Might drive on any range.

If I had vessels on the sea
To sail in every breeze,
I could put on the best of clothes—
No use for me to freeze.

If I could talk like Billy Bryan,
What crowds on earth could draw;
I could put on a stövepipe hat,
Not have a hungry maw.

If I had some of Grover's pile
Would never sup red rye;
Why not I drink the very best,
And have old hot mince pie?

Now, I can't have all these good things
Like all these Upper Tens,
But I can think and tell my tale,
And this makes some amends.

I tell my tale of men thus blessed,,
Have they no cloudy skies?
O, tell me, friends, of some great man
Who has entire supplies.

Who has a joyous heart each hour,
Who is devoid of care,
Who has no pain to check his joy,
Who lives without a fear.

I'd like to talk to such a man,
Would rub against his wall,
Electrify my own dear self,
Would try to have his call.

Then I would be another man,
Could play another part,
Be better fixed with wholesome food,
Could have a joyous heart.

But we must work in our own groove,
Just play in life our part;
Some must cut wood, and water draw,
Some act a chieftain's part.

Contentment is the gift we need,
Be glad that we were born,
Not crave the grapes that hang too high,
Let them our homes adorn.

This world of ours, a compact whole,
Each suited to his art;
If we would do what we should do,
Play well our own dear part.

No king can play the part of clown,
No clown can be a king;
No man ordained to be a man
Can be a worthless thing.

No imbecile guide ship of state,
No beggar hold domain;
But each one has a work to do,
And each one has a claim.

Some claims are light, have air to breathe
And water which is free;
But food and raiment can't prepare,
But eat and wear with glee.

Some have no pantry and no safe,
No house to live within,
But have an art to graze all 'round,
They play on other's strings.

Some have a mouth that's set to talk,
Their mouth is their resource,
And we all fools, we go to hear,
We know they lie, of course.

But what of this, we pass the time,
We hear them spin their yarn,
We have a laugh, enjoy the fun,
We hear them blow their horn.

Some *men* do rhyme the *strangest verse*—
Now, do they have a call?
Ye wisest men of learned lore,
Please answer once for all.

By-Gone Days in Texas.

While calmness reigns around supreme
I take my pen in hand
To write a verse of bygone days
Of this, our Texas land.

Of vulgar boots up to the knees,
And spurs strapped to the heel,
A hickory shirt, and pants hung on,
Would hold a sack of meal.

A broad-brimmed hat, a pipe in mouth,
A puff as we would go,
A common thing in Texas here,
Abroad, a wondrous show.

But this not all, my dearest friends,
A horse to suit the man,
A mustang here, with foulest traits,
So hard to make him stand.

But place a blind right o'er his eyes,
And fix the saddle firm,
And have the bridle hang all right
For old Statesman to learn.

Now, who e'er would, with chance so fair,
Refuse to ride a horse?
A chance like this, passed by on earth,
May prove forever lost.

A talk like this, it will convince,
We hold a solemn face;
But don't you look too close, my friend,
You might some mischief trace.

All orders do initiate,
And we must do the same,
For when a man gets on good pitch,
He learns one Texas game.

Now this ain't all, my dearest friend,
About the Texas Horse;
When least expecting low-life work,
He tries to throw you off.

When hard at work for days and days,
As gentle as a lamb,
But feed this horse awhile on oats,
He has another plan.

Just sit well back and hold the bits,
You never fall behind,
But hold your grip, don't fall on neck—
You might slip off the blind.

There is romance in stirrup life,
Just say whate'er you may;
A romping gang, lads all well met,
For fun, or dance, or fray.

The old boys' heads have all turned gray,
They laid out in the frost,
Have wrinkles, too, from old-time laughs,
Would laugh, whate'er the cost.

We can't forget, our old-time friends,
While sun upon us shines,
We had some joys in Texas then,
Above the mighty dime.

Written After Visiting the Alamo.

I stood amid historic walls
Of ancient build and form,
The wheel of time had done its wrok,
But all these walls were firm.

My mind ran back to early days,
The days of early men;
I thought of war amid these walls,
The fall of ancient men.

I hear their cheers, stand to your post;
I hear the musket ring,
I see men fall on every post,
Death has no bitter sting.

A smile of joy upon their cheek,
Seem reconciled to death;
Would rather fight and die like men
Than craven cowards left.

We sing their songs of valor now,
We praise their deeds of earth,
We praise the cause for which they died,
This cause gave freedom birth.

Then let these walls stand through all time
A witness of the scene,
And let the poet write a line
Describing valor's sheen.

State Capitol.

We stood beneath the dome of state,
A giant wall of strength;
A thought ran out, o'er Texas land,
Its massive width and length.

Its pasture lands, with lowing herds,
Its fields of solid grain,
Its cotton lands of snowy wealth,
Its thousands to maintain.

O! what a land of joy and peace,
What wealth is brought to view,
But strange to say, my honest friends,
Amassed by very few.

O! could the people reap this wealth,
Not build the millionaire;
O! what a happy land we'd have,
No farmer need despair.

But while the serf is forced to dig,
And wealth have palace car;
The wicked here have evil rule,
They do create this jar.

But heaven will smile at last, my friends;
God sits upon His throne,
And He will change the powers that be,
And build a better dome.

A Tribute to the Memory of Dr. P. C. Woods.

The man no more upon life's stage,
No more the friendly face;
But acts he did, we can't forget,
We all his works can trace.

The poor will tell in days to come
Of help from friendly hand;
The weak can tell they had no fear
When he was in command.

In stormy hours, when clouds were dark,
A tempest in our land;
We see him then, he stems the flood,
He then is in command.

But when a calm pervades our coast
And balmy breezes blow,
A smile again on friendly face,
Now all his virtues flow.

O, could I paint this picture, friends,
Give every tint and hue,
Show all the virtues of his life,
Say only what is due.

A greater page would be required,
A stronger hand to paint;
I would lay down my brush at once,
I would grow weak and faint.

But I must say, what all will say,
No better friend we know;
No other man to fill his place,
No heart a better flow.

Hunter.

Now, Hunter is a place of cheer,
No local option here;
For friend with friend can take a smile,
And talk of things so dear.

We have a room of joy and peace,
A place no troubles come;
Where we can spend a part of life
Beneath that happy dome.

Where we can smile, and smile again,
Each smile will give relief,
And every smile we have in town
Will banish human grief.

And here we drink of Nectar's cup,
Sweet visions follow on,
And when we all are full of joy
We can not feel forlorn.

We then can weep with those who weep,
Can share a fellow's woes,
Can tip our glass, say friend to friend,
Here all our trouble goes.

And the distressed of every race,
From distance far and wide,
Come here to spend an hour or two,
And from their troubles hide.

And when they leave have voices tuned,
All pitched a little high,
This pitch may come from lager beer,
Or come from mellow rye.

DEC 11 1903

